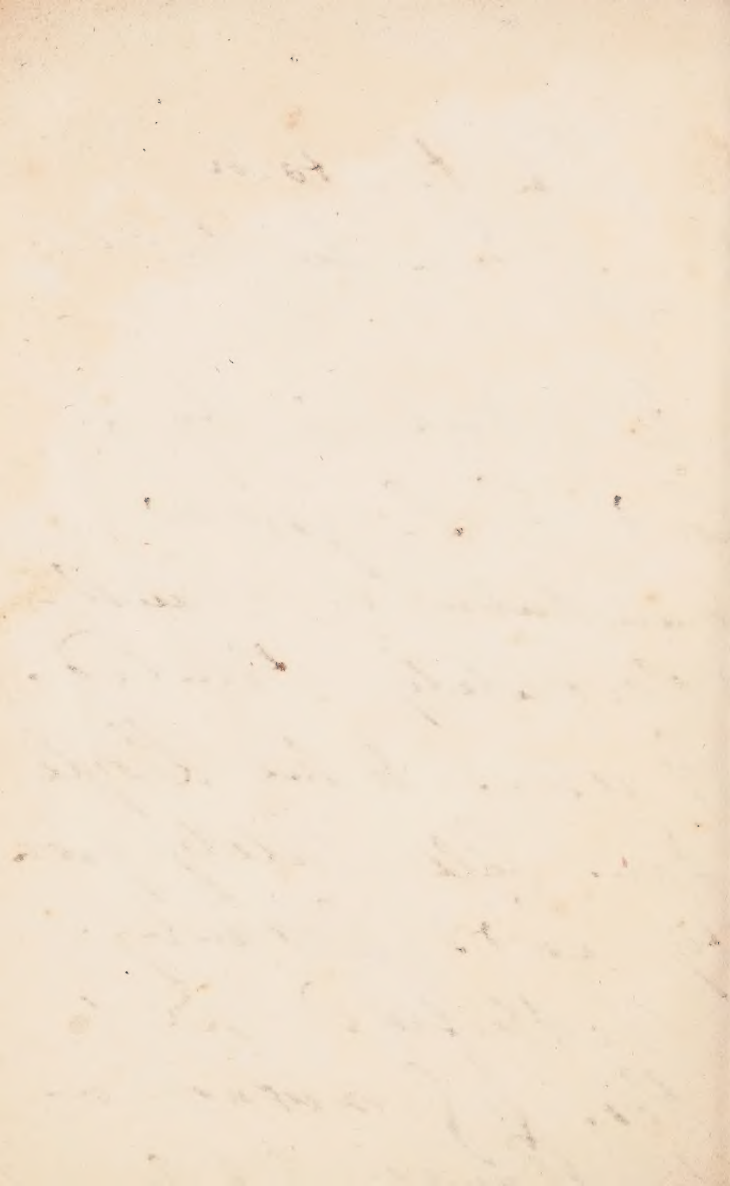


B—E F—M.

Only 50 copies printed.

to
John P. Astor & Co
From the Publisher

This Book is by
Lord F. L. Gower
Grand Duke of Faint
Privately Printed.
It refers to the Boyle
Lam. file lately given
by Lord Alton
The Marquis de
Ross & Garrison on
the Thames. N. B. A.



B———*E* *F*———*M*.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

B——E F—M.



Leman Power

LONDON :
WILLIAM AINSWORTH.
MDCCCXXVII.



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B———E F——M.

THOU sentient tube, whose secret spell
For sixpence Brougham explains so well,
That from the kitchen to the attics
Each household dabbles in pneumatics !
How have I watched thy liquid ore,
And bow'd thy mystic shrine before,
To learn, if so the gods allow'd,
The destiny of sun or cloud,
Decreed by kind or angry Heaven,
For June the thirtieth, twenty-seven !

Long had the falling glass requited
That hapless race the uninvited,

Who placed their pleasure and their pride in
The subtle mercury's subsiding.
In taunting tone they spoke their trust,
“ That storms like these would lay the dust.
A hundred water-carts prepared !
At least that outlay may be spared.”
Thus gibed they, and condemn'd us all
To misery and a wet Vauxhall.

Meek hope and humble faith despises
Such warnings.—Lo ! the index rises ;
The joyous face of heaven the while
Resumes the universal smile,
Which neither heaven nor man deny
To thee, good-humoured A——y.

Oft have I seen in Biscay's main,
When head to wind some ship has lain,
Sore struggling with the tempest's forces,
With masts made snug and close-reef'd courses,

Sudden exulting sailors hail
The omens of a favouring gale,
Stay-sail and flying gib unroll'd,
Quit the dark caverns of the hold ;
To shake the reefs out every hand
Is busy, every yard is mann'd,
Till like a butterfly she sweeps,
With all her mighty wings, the deeps.

'Tis thus from bandboxes and presses
Confiding beauty culls her dresses,
And more determined forth she draws
The snow-white slip, the virgin gauze.
Pledge of her trust in wind and weather,
She bids it droop, the graceful feather,
Fearful no more lest rain should spoil it,
That pride of all the morning toilette ;
Bracelet and chain conclude the list
Round the fair neck and loaded wrist,

Of various mineral and mold,
Iron from Berlin, India's gold,
Vienna's talismanic signs,
The Koran's efficacious lines.

Sure, when the dress of former ages
Our children's scrutiny engages,
When antiquarians explore
The bracelets which their mothers wore,
Some future bard will rise to praise
The female strength of former days,
And show this weight of golden fetters,
To prove their grandmothers their betters.

'Tis done ; the last has left its place
Of rest in that red oblong case,
Whose well-known form and hue explains
So well the treasure it contains ;
And, as the taper wrist it rounded,
Gently the clicking clasp has sounded.

Now, each amusement antedating,
I see her at the window waiting,
Like ship for fight or speed prepared,
Her sails all bent, her yards all squared ;
Which, mann'd with hands and hearts all able,
Lies with a spring upon her cable,
And waits the telegraph's command
To gain her offing from the land.

Soft, ere the carriage-step descends,
And ere her course the muse attends,
And, following close the Briskha's rattle,
Pursues her to the press of battle,
I crave permission for expressing
My parting wishes, and my blessing.
Heaven send, to sooth her chaperon's cares,
Presumptive and expectant heirs ;
And midst them that less frequent treasure,
A partner who can keep the measure !

May others still remain enraged
To find her through the night engaged ;
May locks at mid-day curled, at two
Remain untouched by damp or dew,
Which make all tresses droop and drip so,
The curled, the crepé, and Calypso !
My charm is said, my blessing done ;
I trust not idly breathed on one
Whom Nature, Maradan, and Kitching
Have toil'd alike to make bewitching.

Oh, Maradan ! thy fame refuses
The utmost efforts of the muses ;
For, not like mine, thy midnight taper
Was lit for waste of ink and paper,
But for those works which Pallas loved,
For which her zeal the goddess proved,
By quickly changing to a spider
The luckless rival who defied her.

For weeks within thy shop, they say,
Thy maidens turn'd the night to day ;
Assistants and eleves were tired,
And countless 'prentices expired ;
Needle in hand, 'tis said, they died on
Till every dress was shaped and tried on,
Till flounce and flower had found their station,
And every gown its destination.

Oh ! why, but for the sad prevention
Of my unfortunate invention,
Why, but to bother, vex, and bore me,
Did Moore ' perform my task before me ?
Why did he ever make us hear
Of Nourmahal, or of Cashmere ?
Oh ! why has poet e'er composed
A strain so sweet and so berosed,
When I have need to count the noses
Of all the words which rhyme to roses,

Before I e'en can sketch the charm
Of thy solemnity, B —— e F—m !

So at the opera, at a venture,
Some fair one's box perchance we enter,
And find one seated to his mind there,
Him whom we least would wish to find there ;
The man whose speech's dangerous powers
We think alone can master ours ;
The man who leaves each topic dry,
Then flings it down for us to try ;
Who pillages of wit and zest
Our own anticipated jest ;
With pity and composure treats us ;
In short, who in a canter beats us.

Thus, in my own case, ill I brook
To see thy author, Lalla Rookh,
Before I e'en have started at her,
Close seated by my subject-matter.

I wish to heaven we had them here,
Dear Moore, your beauties of Cashmere.
If at B——e F—m I once could catch them
And did not in ten seconds match them,
Let those for whom I sing disown me,
And like the Bacchanalians stone me.

Yes, bring her here, the flower of all,
The caliph's favourite, Nourmahal ;
She who now hangs upon my arm
Shall meet and match her, charm for charm,
Though none can say that by selection
I offer'd her that arm's protection ;
And none can call my terms unfair
If chance has placed the loveliest there.
Let Laurence judge— my life upon it,
The turban yields it to the bonnet.

Though 'tis the right of our profession
Still from digression to digression

To stray, reflection summons back
My muse to gain her proper track.
First let that muse impartial state,
When coaches have discharged their freight,
When through the grounds the guests have stray'd,
And each preparative survey'd,
Why are such wistful glances sent
To yonder regimental tent.
The fairy Peri ² Banou gave
That tent to her young prince, the slave
Of more than mortal beauty's spells,
As old Arabia's legend tells.
I know not by what chance the Blues
Have stepp'd into prince Ahmed's shoes.
It once sufficed for eastern nations
To smoke their pipes, and eat their rations ;
The sultan, court, and all the forces
Here eat, and slept, and held discourses ;
But to a peace establishment
The Blues reduced this mighty tent,

And Gunter lays around its poles
His covers for five hundred souls.

With Byron's³ hero I agree
In this. My tent is more to me
Than is that deck'd conservatory,
Where peers and princes, in their glory,
Partake the feast, and see their state
Reflected back from fretted plate ;
Where those who lately made a din
By throwing corn out, throw it in.
I have no wish to dine by ticket ;
I love to wander, and to nick it,
And gain by stratagem, or skill,
The very chair I wish to fill.
Here freedom reigns, no George and garter
From me with solemn bow can part her,
Whose smiles, not lessen'd by champagne,
Inspire as now my harmless strain,

And for the moment brighter make me
Than that for which most mortals take me.
I love, 'mid noise of forks and dishes,
To speak my sentiments and wishes.
When Midas ⁴ to the reeds preferr'd them,
The sedges blabb'd, and all men heard them.
But with a whisper not too loud,
And head towards the cutlet bow'd,
I keep each ear but one from gleaning
The least iota of my meaning.
How reason's power, how logic's force,
Increases in the second course !
How tongues are loosed, so late unable
To stir when fish was on the table !
If 'twere, as it is not, my cue
Some gentle object to pursue,
I ask no strange advantage sequent
On something wond'rous or unfrequent ;
I ask not in the dangerous wave
First to upset her, then to save ;

I ask not midnight's silent hour,
The perfumed air, the moonlit bower,
(Though these were useful aids to seize on
For passion's triumph over reason),
Of all the twenty-four to win her,
Grant me, kind Heaven, the hour of dinner !

'Tis evening now, the sun is sinking,
To warn us from protracted drinking.
Yon lighted, boarded, chalk'd pavilion
Is destined for the gay cotillion.
How with an eastern air it stands,
Like some gay hall on Ganges' sands,
Reminding veterans from India
Of Dowla, Ragonaut, and Scindiah,
And halls where rajahs of Benares
Are wont to play their dull vagaries !
No dull ones ours : not e'en to me,
Who since the gout has seized my knee

Have ceased my dancing. Still I love
To beat the measure as they move,
And fix a critic glance on those
Whose awkward limbs, and leaden toes,
Still while they live must fail to find it,
Still dart before, or lag behind it,
And baffle music's choicest sounds
By wily turns, and desperate bounds.

Then stray we for awhile to hear
The strong-limb'd, green-capp'd mountaineer ;
Or yield at once the melting soul
To Caradori's barcarolle ;
Or while from shore the mortals stare on,
Let me accept the place of Charon,
And raise, while joyous souls I ferry,
The lay of my enchanted wherry.

“ See, my bark has long been waiting,
Prompt to sail at beauty's call ;

Hush your scruples, cease debating,

Enter—there is room for all ;

But her builder never meant her

To receive the vulgar throng.

Wit, and song, and beauty, enter ;

Gaily then she glides along.

“ Ask not what my bark can carry ;

Ask not how she steers her way ;

Starry lamps, and eyes more starry,

Guide the helmsman on his way.

From the rising waters shrink not,

Though too nearly they approach ;

Wit, and song, and beauty, sink not,

Though rebellious waves encroach.

“ There are voices here to charm them,

And the eyes which they reflect

Of their terrors can disarm them ;—

See, the waves have learnt respect.

Now sit fast : the chain I sever,
Which confines us to the shore,
Hearts of lighter burthen never
Laughing Pleasure's lifeboat bore.

“ Pleasure's gayest chaplets crown us ;
What can then awake our fears ?
A sigh might sink, a tear might drown us ;
What to us are sighs or tears ?
If amidst us Care be coiling,
Find the deepest pool for him ;
Plunge him where its depths are boiling ;
Fear no murder—Care can swim.

“ Care would call me vagrant, rover,
Ask me where I shaped my course.
Seize the miscreant ! fling him over !
Answering him would make me hoarse.
Fear not. None have ever found me
Doubtful where to lead my crew ;

By the eyes which beam around me
I can read the compass true.

“ Float we now by yonder willow ;
Never dew-bespangled trees,
Bending low to kiss the billow,
Wept such radiant drops as these :
Scarce so bright in her lamenting
Eye of widowed love appears ;
Eyes of Magdalen repenting
Shone less brightly through her tears.

“ To receive the stream we float on
Would the sea did not exist ;
Would that I might urge my boat on
Still for ever where I list !
But the voice whose spell, delighting,
First seduced me from the shore,
Now to new pursuits inviting,
Bids me moor my bark once more.”

And hark ! a novel sound surprises ;
In air the warning rocket rises.
'T was thus, on Leipzic's awful night,
When warring Europe paused in fight,
The fiery sign mysterious rose,
Ill understood by all but those
Who knew by previous information ;
It told them that another nation,
With forward Blucher ⁵ in its ranks,
Was station'd on Napoleon's flanks.

How quick that warning sound has made
A desert of each lonely glade !
Each silent walk and half-lit alley
Are dull as Johnson's happy valley ;
Forlorn of every living thing
The Indian cottage and the spring.
In one beshawl'd, befeather'd cluster,
Upon the river's banks they muster,

To view, not glimpses of the new light,
But rocket, Catherine wheel, and blue-light.
Thus, when some leader, to make good
His station, fills a neighbouring wood
With those insidious troops in green,
Whose powers are sooner felt than seen ;
If suddenly his own position
The foe should threaten with perdition,
The bugle sounds ; o'er all the plain
The scatter'd masses close again ;
Kicking their steeds with all their feet,
The skirmishing hussars retreat,
Resume the sabre from the side ;
And sling the carbine as they ride.
Then from the bristling square once more
The musquetry's collected roar,
In one tremendous chorus, stifles
The dropping fire of scatter'd rifles.

Triumphs of carbon and of nitre,
None ever saw or wish'd ye brighter.
How sweet, for those like me, who love
To catch the moments as they move,
To watch the corruscations buoy'd
An instant on the murky void,
The next by gravitation's power
Melt in their gorgeous golden shower !
But most I love to turn and gaze
On all that mimic day displays,
On eyes that watch that fiery levin,
And saint-like glances turn'd to heaven,
Brows to the fleeting glare exposed,
And lips in rapture half unclosed.

'T is thus my recollection paints
The sight of Milan's thousand saints,
Martyr and monk, each sculptured form,
Lit by the tapers of the storm.

Though thunder-drops were round me plashing,
I stood to watch the lightning's flashing,
Which wrapt in momentary brightness
The duomo in its marble whiteness.

But ah for me, and for my lyre !
Like rocket which has spent its fire,
'T is time to hiss, and to expire.
Not mine to interfere at all in
The sad details of carriage-calling :
Yet shall the parting bard his due
Absolve, illustrious five, to you !
The warmest thanks in verse the dullest,
And may the open hand be fullest ;
May all your purses, such my wish is,
Be unexhausted as your dishes ;
May better bards arise than me
To sing thy praises, A——y :

And sing those, too, in strains befitting,
Who, nought forgetting or omitting,
Concentrated, with magic powers,
A year's amusement in six hours !

NOTES.

Note 1, line 12, page 7.

Did Moore perform my task before me?

It certainly is discouraging to find all description of the fête, which is the subject of my rhymes, so completely anticipated by the "Light of the Harem."

Note 2, line 9, page 10.

The fairy Peri Banou gave.

For the story of Prince Ahmed and the fairy Peri Banou, see Arabian Nights, Scott's edition, vol. 5.

Note 3, line 3, page 11.

With Byron's hero I agree.

"My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
Are more than cities or serais to me."

Note 4, line 5, page 12.

When Midas to the reeds preferr'd them.

I am terribly afraid that I have here substituted Midas himself for his barber, who was the delinquent on this occasion. I have no time, like the Princess in Walpole's Hieroglyphick Tales, to run home and consult some thousand volumes on the subject, still less to alter the verses.

Note 5, line 9, page 18.

With forward Blucher in its ranks.

The arrival of Blucher's army in position is said to have been announced to the allies on the left in the manner which I have described.

THE END.

LONDON:

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